

flashing, horns blaring, sirens screaming, eventually joined the chase. The driver was in a state of total panic by now, with good reason. Landing in the tender care of the Iraqi police or other security services at the time was no less pleasant than it is to-day.

It was when we crossed the same bridge across the Tigris for the third time that I suddenly realised that I had forgotten to bring my passport — the guys in the screaming cars behind would not like that at all. Just then the driver got boxed in by some buses in a one-way street. The pursuers stopped and advanced towards us, bristling with guns. The driver reversed (at which point I left the cab), and went past them in the opposite direction at great speed. All the police and militia piled into their cars and set off in hot pursuit. I dived into an alley. Had they really missed seeing me abandon ship? They had. I flagged down a cab and went to the Palestine Hotel. I paid three times the regular fare without a murmur. The next hour was spent phoning every person of any influence I knew in Bagdad, telling them my story. I hoped it would also count for something that I had an official meeting with the Minister of Health the next day. They must eventually have caught the taxi driver, and I hate to think what they would have done to him, but at least he had behaved with stupidity. I was more concerned about the poor old man and his nephew; the innocent lift I had given them could well become the basis of a spying charge. But there was nothing I could do.

A few days later I left. There were no problems at the airport. I settled down in my seat on the rickety Iraqi Airways Trident aircraft. Finally safe? Suddenly a platoon of heavily armed police charged on board. Oh . . . my god!!! It turns out they are the escort of a deportee, who is unceremoniously chained to his seat. Some people are less keen to leave Bagdad than others. Despite remonstrations from the cabin crew the deportee succeeds in lighting up a cigarette before take-off. As the wheels leave the runway I cannot say that I am unduly perturbed by that.— T.B. LARSEN, 358 Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 8PL.

New Lepidoptera for Guernsey

On 7.vi.1989, two mercury vapour lights were operated in a dense stand of tamarisk (*Tamarix gallica*) near Cobo Bay, Guernsey, in an attempt to catch *Eupithecia ultimaria* Boisduval (Channel Islands Pug). Although this species was not present in the catches, single males of *Sideridis albicolon* Hübner (White Colon) and *Eupithecia fraxinata* H.-Crewe (Ash Pug) were caught and these are new to the Guernsey list (R. Austin, pers. comm.). The capture of *E. fraxinata* is particularly interesting as sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) is absent from the island and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) is not present in this part of Guernsey (R. Austin, *loc. cit.*). These are the only currently accepted British foodplants for *E. fraxinata*. The individual may represent the tamarisk-feeding race formerly known as *E.*

tamarisciata Freyer, the Cornish Tamarisk Pug, recorded by Tutt (1906; 1908) from larvae collected by Holmes in Cornwall at the beginning of the century. G. Prior (pers. comm.) also found an *E. fraxinata* larva on Cornish tamarisk in September 1979 and the identification of the resulting imago was confirmed by myself. The existence and status of the tamarisk-feeding race of *E. fraxinata* in Britain should be further investigated as it appears to have been overlooked in the more recent literature.

Thanks are extended to R. Austin for his help and advice on Guernsey Lepidoptera and the status of ash and sea buckthorn on the island and to G. Prior for allowing examination of his Cornish *E. fraxinata*.

References. Tutt, J.W. (1906). A puzzling group of Eupitheciids. *Ent. Rec.* **18**: 157-158. Tutt, J.W. (1908). *Eupithecia tamarisciata* as a British insect. *Ent. Rec.* **20**: 102-104.- ADRIAN M. RILEY, Dept. Entomology and Nematology, AFRC Inst. Arable crops Research, Rothamsted Exp. Stn., Harpenden, Herts AL5 2JQ.

Insects and swimming pools

I was interested to read the correspondence (*Ent. Rec.* **102**: 4; **102**: 152) on the question of Purple Hairstreaks and swimming pools, and that both writers should ascribe the attraction of the pool to its blueness.

I have abundant evidence for the attractiveness of sky-blue to beetles, although I have no knowledge either of its mechanism nor the more general understanding of it. It may however be reasoned that changes in the quality or density of air over a large pool could influence flying insects to land in it.

On 21st July 1990 the following beetles were attracted to our sky-blue sun-bed cover at Little Comberton between 20.00 -21.45 BST:

Anotylus tetracarlinatus (Block) 2, *Gabrieus pennatus* Sharp 1, *Tachinus signatus* (Grav.) 3, *Atheta laticollis* (Ste.) 1, *Epuraea unicolor* (Ol.) 1, *Glischrochilus hortensis* (Fourc.) 3, *Monotoma longicollis* (Gyll.), *Cryptolestes ferrugineus* (Ste.) 2, *Atomaria lewisi* Reitt. 2, *Typhaea stercorea* (L.) 1.

My sky-blue parasol that apologises for a beating tray distinguishes itself in a number of ways. Once, whilst inside a hollow oak, hearing an unusual sound, I glanced outside and found that it had opened spontaneously causing a herd of cows to stampede. Its more usual source of interest however arises from the number of insects that fly into it when left opened. Amongst beetles I recall in particular *Paromalus flavicornis* (Hbst.) and *Dorcatoma chrysomelina* Stm. All of this supports a possibility that the attraction is colour-based.

The beetle *Meligethes aeneus* (F.) has a particular perception of colour occurring in prodigious numbers on such yellow flowers as *Hemerocallis* and *Centaurea macrocephala* Muss. Pushk. and on such purple ones as *Allium giganteum* Regel. In 1988, over 10,000 *M. aeneus* were in one blue pool in Worcestershire.— P.F. WHITEHEAD, Moors Ley, Little Comberton, Worcestershire WR10 3EP.